Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1-8 are pending and rejected in the application. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

On page 2, the Official Action rejects claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner believes that the recitation of "*wherein the howling deciding section finally decides that howling occurs when the howling detection section decides howling occurrence*" is not clear. Applicants have, therefore, amended claims 1 and 8 for clarification.

Applicants' invention, as recited by claim 1, includes patentable features, namely:

> **... a howling detecting section for ... outputting a howling detection signal ...**
>
> **... a periodic signal detecting section for ... outputting a periodic detection signal ...**
>
> **... a howling deciding section ... decides that howling occurs when the howling detection signal indicates howling is detected and the periodic detection signal indicates that the time progression ... does not have periodicity.**

Claim 1 relates to 1) a howling detection section, 2) a periodic signal detecting section and 3) a howling deciding section. Specifically, the howling deciding section decides that howling has occurred when the howling detecting section detects howling and the periodic signal detecting section does not detect periodicity. Support for these features can be at least found on page 23 of the originally filed application and furthermore in Fig. 2. No new matter has been added.

As shown in Applicants' Fig. 2, howling deciding section 107 decides that howling occurs based on the signals output from periodic signal detecting section 106 and howling detecting section 105. Specifically, periodic signal detecting section 106 analyzes the signal output from level calculating section 104 and outputs a signal indicating whether periodicity has been detected or not. Howling detection section

105 also analyzes the signal output from level calculating section 104 and outputs a signal indicating whether howling has been detected or not. Based on the howling detection signal output from 105 and the periodic detection signal output from 106, the howling deciding section 107 is able to determine whether howling has occurred or not.

For example, when the howling detection signal indicates howling has been detected and the periodic detection signal indicates that periodicity has not been detected, then the howling deciding section 107 decides that howling has occurred. This feature is at least supported in on page 12, line 10 to page 13, line 15 and furthermore, on page 23, lines 1-20 of Applicants' specification ("*when the howling detecting section 105 decides that howling occurs and the periodic signal detecting section 106 does not decide that the time progression of the level has periodicity, the howling deciding section 107 decides that howling occurs*"). Thus, the howling deciding section 107 utilizes the signal's output from both howling detecting section 105 and periodic signal detecting section 106 to decide whether howling has occurred or not.

The language in claim 1 now clearly recites a howling detector. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested. Applicants also note that the claims have not been rejected under prior art. Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, claim 1 is patentable.

Claim 8 has similar features to claim 1. Thus, claim 8 is also patentable for at least the reasons set forth above.

Dependent claims 2-7 include all the features of the claims from which they depend. Thus, claims 2-7 are also patentable for at least the reasons set forth above.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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